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"Ah, yes! The field of Saratoga is rich with the blood of heroes. What are the few names we have recorded compared with the unnumbered hosts who lie under the placid hills of the Hudson — or who performed upon this field unnoticed deeds of valor, and passed through life unregarded and unnamed!"

— Ellen Hardin Walworth, 1891



“...We continued to press on, keeping our lines as well as the ground would permit; loading and firing rapidly as possible as we advanced. Our steps were lively, but we did not run. I saw no fighting with bayonets. At one time I saw just before me a British officer sitting and supporting himself by a tree. I drew up and was about to shoot him, when I thought the man is wounded and I let him live....”

— Sergeant Ambrose Collins, Cook’s Regiment of Connecticut Militia

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Saratoga NHP preserves and protects sites associated with the battles, siege, and surrender of British forces at Saratoga.

Purpose and Significance of Saratoga National Historical Park

The foundation for the general management plan rests on the park's purpose and significance. The purpose and significance statements are based on the park's authorizing legislation and its legislative history. Purpose states why the park was established as a unit of the national park system. Significance defines the park's place within its national context.

Park Purpose

Saratoga National Historical Park preserves and protects sites associated with the battles, siege, and surrender of British forces at Saratoga — decisive events in winning American independence. The park staff interprets these and other sites, events, and people associated with the 1777 military campaign in the Champlain-Hudson and Mohawk valleys (the Burgoyne Campaign).

Park Significance

Saratoga National Historical Park:

- ⌘ Honors the participants and preserves the battlegrounds where a major British military offensive in 1777 ended in a surrender that heartened the patriot cause and brought about the international recognition and aid essential to securing our nation's freedom.
- ⌘ Contains the Saratoga estate of General Philip Schuyler, an outstanding figure during the revolutionary period and commander of the northern theater of operations between June 1775 and August 1777.
- ⌘ Presents a richly monumented landscape reflecting a commemorative movement, which culminated in the establishment of the national historical park in 1938.



Spectators at the Freeman farm during the Sesquicentennial of October 8, 1927. The event attracted over 160,000 people.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are ways of organizing information and ideas to help understand the park's importance. They express the key concepts that illuminate park resources. Themes are concepts, rather than a simple listing of important topics or a chronology of events.

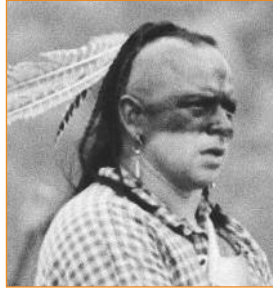
Place: Grand Strategy and Victory for the New Nation

In 1777 — the second year of America's War for Independence — the British sought to quell the rebellion with a single decisive military campaign. Their plan depended on using an invading army to divide the Colonies along a natural corridor of rivers and lakes stretching from Canada to New York City. The American commitment to halt this invasion proved critical to the future of an emerging nation.

- ⌘ The Americans' determined resistance at Saratoga, coupled with British strategic blunders, resulted in a stunning defeat and surrender of a British army. This timely victory reversed American

military fortunes, boosted patriot morale, and gained them international recognition and support, including vital military assistance.

- ⌘ The defensive position south of Saratoga at Bemis Heights was chosen because the terrain there afforded the Americans tactical advantages. Their skillful use of the high ground overlooking a narrow river passageway, and wooded ravines fortified with entrenchments and batteries, forced the British army to fight on terms favorable to the Americans.
- ⌘ Since pre-Colonial times, the waterways of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers and Lakes Champlain and George had been prized natural routes of communication, trade, and warfare — coveted by those seeking control of this vast area's rich natural resources and arable land.



People from many different walks of life — men and women, soldiers and civilians, free and enslaved — found themselves caught up in the battles of Saratoga, by choice or by chance.

People: At Saratoga — by Choice or by Chance

Today, the winning of American independence seems to have been inevitable. But it was actually the result of many individual decisions and sacrifices made by people from all walks of life. Their determination in surmounting enormous obstacles was an early example of what is recognized now as the American spirit — the will and ability to shape a better future.

- ⌘ Participants on both sides of the conflict — men and women, soldiers and civilians, free and enslaved, and those of many nations — were motivated by hopes and aspirations, including personal or monetary gain, continuance of established ways of life, desire for a better future, or belief in a moral cause.
- ⌘ General Philip Schuyler, a patriot statesman and military leader, risked his life and livelihood and lost his Saratoga home for his belief in the promise of a new and independent United States of America, affording political and economic liberties for its citizens. After his death, his family continued his policies of promoting canal transportation and fostering commercial enterprise in the community that became known as Schuylerville in his honor.

Memory: Creating a Shared American Identity

Monuments and memorials added to Saratoga's "sacred ground" represent early national efforts to honor those who served their country and the causes

for which they made their sacrifices. The park and its monuments and historic markers contribute to a shared American identity and an evolving sense of patriotism.

- ⌘ The Saratoga Monument stands prominently within the British camp where the decision to surrender was made in October 1777. The site symbolizes the decisive turn in the American struggle for independence and serves as an eternal reminder of the human cost of both the American victory and the British defeat.
- ⌘ Ellen Hardin Walworth's efforts to commemorate the Saratoga battles marked the beginning of her lifelong commitment to preserving the icons of our national identity and the creation of local, state, and national organizations to achieve those goals.



John H. Starin, President of the Saratoga Monument Association, 1895.

Goals

Goals articulate the ideal conditions that park managers strive to attain in perpetuity. These goals assert the ideals that Saratoga National Historical Park is protected, that park visitors are informed and satisfied, and that the park works with others to foster stewardship.

The following goals (not listed in priority order) guide Saratoga National Historical Park:

Resource Management

- ⌘ The landscapes, buildings, structures, archeological sites, artifacts, and archives that are significant to the 1777 Saratoga campaign are protected, preserved, and maintained in good condition.
- ⌘ The monuments and historic markers that are significant to the commemoration of the 1777 Saratoga campaign are protected, preserved, and maintained in good condition.
- ⌘ Contributions are made to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of cultural and natural resources related to the site's historical significance and to its ecological importance in the upper Hudson River Valley.
- ⌘ The park's natural resources are managed in the context of a cultural park to foster healthy ecosystems.

Visitor Use and Interpretation

- ⌘ The public is helped to understand and appreciate the sacred and commemorative nature of the park's landscape and the significance of the military events that took place here on the outcome of the American Revolution and the consequent impact on world political developments.
- ⌘ Quality programs are provided that make available to a wide range of audiences the park's stories and resources, and foster opportunities for visitors to make emotional and intellectual connections with the meaning inherent in those stories and resources.
- ⌘ A variety of safe recreational experiences are provided in locations and at levels that ensure the long-term protection of the park's natural and cultural resources.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

- ⌘ Partnerships are established to develop educational programs and to foster stewardship of park resources, landscapes, and values both within and beyond park boundaries.

Need for the Plan

General management plans are intended to remain in effect for 15–20 years. In principle, the effective period could extend longer if few major changes occurred in the park and its surroundings. This, however, is decidedly not the case at Saratoga National Historical Park. Since the completion of the 1969 master plan, a number of significant changes in park resources, visitor use patterns, and regional initiatives have occurred. These are deep-seated changes, affecting the park at all levels, with the result that the master plan is no longer adequate to address policy and operational concerns. Consultation among the public, the planning team, and park staff identified the following list of substantial planning issues, which are addressed in the general management plan.

Resource Management

- ⌘ The battlefield's landscape management has been based on a circa-1950 historic base map. More recent research, which incorporates new historical insights, highlights the need for additional reforestation and clearing to approximate the 1777 field-forest configuration. Approximating this configuration would make interpretation of the battles more accurate.
- ⌘ A number of management issues have yet to be satisfactorily addressed for the Schuyler Estate, including preservation treatment, interpretation, and visitor use. Research related to the historic development of the property has recently been completed.
- ⌘ Since the 1969 master plan, lands have been added to the park that embrace important historic resources related to the Burgoyne Campaign. Such sites include Gates's Headquarters and the American Hospital at the battlefield and the 22-acre Victory Woods tract in the Old Saratoga Unit. Victory Woods was donated in the 1970s and has never been



Left: Construction of Interstate 87 changed traffic patterns and shifted the primary gateway of the park from Route 4 to its “rear entrance” off of Route 32 via the maintenance facilities.

Right: The largely rural park setting could be diminished by advancing urbanization.

available to visitors. At the outset of this planning process, the historical significance of Victory Woods was unclear and the future of the property was in question. Preliminary research conducted in support of this planning effort indicates that Victory Woods contains remnants of the final British fortified camp.

- ⌘ The historic Champlain Canal runs through two segments of the park, one on the east perimeter of the battlefield and the other through the grounds of the Schuyler Estate. Because the canal is not its primary mission, the park has not developed a management and interpretation plan for canal resources. However, these remains are historically significant and possess considerable interest for many visitors. The historic Champlain Canal is part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, for which a preservation and management plan commenced in 2003.
- ⌘ Saratoga National Historical Park has collected entry fees to the battlefield tour road from May to October since 1987. No fees are collected at the Schuyler Estate or the Saratoga Monument. Due to the location of the visitor center (where the fee is collected) and visitor use patterns, fee collection is inefficient and the park actually loses revenues on fee collection.
- ⌘ Park managers strive to conduct a program of maintenance and preservation to safeguard the physical integrity of park resources and to provide a safe and sanitary environment for park visitors and employees. This effort at Saratoga National Historical Park is complicated

by the lack of nearby facilities to maintain the Old Saratoga Unit. Major maintenance activities for the Schuyler Estate are supported by the maintenance facility located eight miles to the south at the Battlefield Unit, which creates inefficiencies in terms of fuel consumption, wear on vehicles, and time spent traveling instead of conducting maintenance activities.

- ⌘ Many species of invasive exotic plants have become established at the park and threaten native species. These aggressive plants can greatly expand their populations, alter forest and wildlife habitats, and change scenery by smothering and displacing native species. These effects, which are already occurring in some areas of the park, will worsen substantially if left untreated.
- ⌘ Grasslands comprise nearly one-third of the park, and are recognized as an important ecosystem worldwide. The majority of grasslands in the Northeast were created for agriculture. Cropland in the Northeast has been declining since the 1930s, returning once-open lands to woods. In addition, modern agricultural practices are becoming increasingly incompatible with nesting success of grassland birds. As a result of these changes, grassland bird populations are suffering the most precipitous population declines of any habitat-specific group in the eastern United States. Large tracts of land, set aside for other purposes but still compatible with the needs of grassland birds, may be the last refuge for these highly vulnerable species.

- ⌘ Water, which supports natural systems and provides for park and visitor use, is a significant resource at Saratoga National Historical Park. While it appears that good water quality exists within the streams flowing through the park, non-point source pollutants associated with increasing residential and urban sources could impact water quality. Both the battlefield and the Schuyler Estate border on the Hudson River. Although the Hudson River has benefited from decades of cleanup efforts, it still bears a legacy of past pollution, most notably contamination by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has listed 200 miles of the Hudson as a federal Superfund site, which includes the portions of the river that border the park.

Visitor Use and Interpretation

- ⌘ Saratoga National Historical Park is composed of four non-contiguous sites. (The Battlefield Unit is located in Stillwater and the Old Saratoga Unit, in the villages of Schuylerville and Victory, contains the Schuyler Estate, the Saratoga Monument, and Victory Woods.) When the master plan was approved in 1969, neither the Saratoga Monument nor Victory Woods were part of the park. As a result of these additions and the distance between the two units, the park does not function as a cohesive entity. The four sites have not been well integrated or linked.
- ⌘ An unplanned consequence of construction of the Northway (I-87) was a change in traffic patterns that shifted the primary gateway of the park from the Route 4 entrance to the Route 32 “rear entrance” via the park’s maintenance facilities. As a result, the formal sense of arrival characteristic of a national park has been severely compromised.
- ⌘ Over 33% of park visitors approach Saratoga National Historical Park from the north. Highway signs, installed for the new Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, serve both the cemetery and the national park. Although they indicate the distance to the battlefield, these signs direct park visitors traveling southbound on I-87 to the Schuyler Estate in the Old Saratoga Unit rather than to the park visitor center in the Battlefield Unit. As a result, the first park experience for many southbound visitors may be an historic house museum tour focused on General Schuyler at the Schuyler House (open only at limited times), not an overview of park themes and general orientation. Thus, many southbound visitors do not understand the main purpose of the park or how best to tour the park until late in their visit.
- ⌘ The battlefield tour road is the primary visitor experience, yet the current sequencing and location of interpretive stops makes understanding the relationship of events difficult. In its current configuration, visitors on the tour road cannot trace the battlefield action in any logical or chronological order. Moreover, few visual cues exist in the landscape to help visitors understand troop movements.
- ⌘ Visitors and local residents like to use the park for many different types of recreational activities. These uses — for example, bird-watching, photography, hiking, or cross-country skiing — are compatible with resource protection and do not require extensive commitments of staff time or funding. Park managers cannot anticipate what type of recreational uses will be in vogue in the future, and certain types of traffic have the potential to cause resource damage in the park. For example, soil erosion has occurred along the equestrian trail and sections of the Wilkinson Trail.
- ⌘ According to a 2001 visitor survey, 95.9% of visitors to Saratoga National Historical Park arrive by private auto; 67.3% tour the park by private auto. The National Park Service developed the park’s transportation system primarily for the private auto. The character of the tour road plays a fundamental role in setting an unhurried pace for the visitor. Within the life of this plan (15–20 years) it is possible that traffic congestion could increase sufficiently to cause delays, noise, and air pollution that could detract from the visitor’s experience and overall resource protection.



Visitor Experience at Saratoga NHP

In contrast with the conditions of over 225 years ago when two armies met and clashed at this site, the park today is a place of scenic beauty and natural sounds, where visitors can walk, bike, and watch wildlife in a rural setting with glaciated ridges, meadows, and forests.



Numerous historic sites along the Champlain corridor figure prominently into the story of the Burgoyne Campaign, including Fort Ticonderoga (shown above), Mount Independence, and Hubbardton battlefield.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

⌘ The British surrender at Saratoga was the culmination of a four-month campaign that extended the length of the Champlain corridor from Canada to the Hudson. Numerous historic sites along this corridor, such as Fort Ticonderoga, Mount Independence, and Hubbardton battlefield, figure prominently into the broader story of the Burgoyne Campaign and were significant to its outcome. In addition, a number of nearby historic properties related to the Burgoyne Campaign remain outside the park boundary, including the Field of Grounded Arms, the Sword Surrender site, the Marshall House, the Swords House site, and the Dirck Swart House. Familiarity with the other thematically related sites along the corridor and within the vicinity of the park would enable visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the events at Saratoga.

- ⌘ Numerous federal, state, and local government entities and nonprofits are working on heritage preservation initiatives in the Champlain-Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. Many of these initiatives converge in Saratoga County, specifically in Old Saratoga, and offer opportunities for National Park Service participation. Representatives of several of these initiatives have identified a need for a multipurpose orientation facility in Old Saratoga that provides information about the various initiatives and clarifies the many offerings available to visitors.
- ⌘ The park's setting, scenic views, air and water quality, soundscape, and condition of its soil are affected by activities conducted outside the park boundaries. For example, the park's "viewsheds" (such as those east to the ridgeline in Easton, New York, south and west across Route 32, and west across Route 4 from the Schuyler Estate) are important components of the visitor's experience. Yet, park managers have no control over how the lands within the viewsheds are developed. The largely rural, agricultural setting of the park, which is an important part of the park's appeal to visitors, could be diminished by the advancing urbanization of the Hudson River Valley.